

Mr. Campana
3rd Grade, 2015-2016
Back to School Information

Here is a more in-depth look at some of the information that we touched on at Back to School Night.

Curriculum:

Reading

The primary goal of our reading program is to help your children develop an appreciation and love of literature while learning the skills required of a successful reader who can read and think INDEPENDENTLY. Your children are well on their way! The major components of the reading program are as follows:

Read Aloud - We will be reading to your children one to two times a day. Research has shown that children who are read to become better readers themselves. Read-aloud material will span several literary genres (poetry, memoir, picture books, chapter books, informational books...). We would like to expose children to many different types of writing to help them discover their reading preferences and to enhance their reading and writing skills. Useful reading strategies will be discussed and modeled in conjunction with read-alouds as well.

Readers Workshop- We will have Reader's Workshop 3-4 times a week. The Readers Workshop model, as developed by Columbia University Teachers College and Lucy Calkins, has been adopted by our district in all elementary schools. This model allows for children to read at their own instructional level while learning important skills and strategies of successful readers. We want the children to realize that ALL readers use these strategies (which just become more subconscious as we mature), not just third graders! Many workshops begin with a mini-lesson on reading strategies (for example, predicting, characterization, sequencing of events, vocabulary, etc.). Children will then independently read self-selected books at their levels. Independent reading is a time for students to practice positive reading strategies and to explore reading interests. During this time, we will confer with students - listen to them read and discuss strategies that may help them become stronger readers. At times during the year, we will read and discuss novels together. It is important that you encourage and support your children in their home reading as well. We will fill in our Reading Logs in school the next school day.

Also during reading workshop, the children will meet in small reading groups at various

times throughout the year. These groups are flexible; sometimes they are based on reading level, and other times on a particular strategy that a group of children is wrestling with. In groups such as these, we will read stories, discuss literary elements (plot, setting, character motivations, etc.), and practice our reading strategies and discussions in a smaller setting.

Reading in other curriculum areas - Children will read in virtually all content areas.

Third grade is a year in which focus begins to change from "learning to read" to "reading to learn."

Reading Resource with Karen Keller and Brenna Galvin will continue to be available to students as a pull-out program. The program is an option for children who are continuing to read below the third grade level.

Writing

Students will participate in Writer's Workshop two to four times a week. Writer's Workshop begins with a mini-lesson (5-10 minutes) designed to introduce or emphasize different positive writing strategies. These strategies could range from using beautiful language and imagery in writing to making sure each sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a period. Literature from read-alouds as well as the children's own writing will be used to illustrate the writing strategies. Students will then spend the period writing. When students have written and collected several "pieces" they will choose one to expand, edit, and publish. We will have Writing Celebrations periodically to share published pieces with family and friends. Because writing is a means by which children can clarify their thinking and show what they know, writing will also be integrated into other subject areas including math, science, and social studies.

Spelling

The goal of our spelling program is to expand and refine children's reading and writing skills. The vehicle for exploring letters, sounds, words, and patterns is Word Study. Rather than rote memorization of a particular list of words, we emphasize pattern recognition and application of prior knowledge. We'll study word groups such as homonyms, synonyms, and contractions as well as discussing common word patterns. We will have periodic spell checks (low-key quizzes) that are designed to reinforce learning patterns. We will also look at writing samples to evaluate spelling progress. We expect children to use available resources and to apply their understanding of patterns to their spelling.

In order to increase children's responsibility for their own work, we will also teach them to check their writing for "No Excuse" words. The children will have these words (the most frequently used words in English) in a little booklet in their desks. We expect the kids to check EVERY piece of writing for the correct spelling of the no excuse words. This does not mean we don't expect other words to be spelled correctly. We also expect the children to spell their best at their particular developmental levels. Not every piece of writing is expected to be perfect! Remember, we are talking about 8- and 9-year-olds; the point of this program is to train children to proofread and to model and expect high quality work.

Grammar

In addition to Word Study, we will study the grammar of the English Language. Sample topics include parts of a sentence, parts of speech, subject/verb agreement, and punctuation.

Handwriting

We will be teaching Contemporary Cursive using the "Handwriting Without Tears" curriculum. We have already taught many lower case letters, and will finish with the capital letters. After we have learned and practiced our cursive, we will ask children to write some assignments in cursive. Concurrently, children are learning keyboarding skills in the lab – look for opportunities to practice at home!

Oral Language and Listening

Sharing ideas and developing thoughtful listening skills are central to success across the curriculum. These skills are integral to the new Common Core Curriculum standards. Opportunities to develop expressive language occur as part of our daily reading group work, during cooperative learning with a math partner, and in whole class discussions around a variety of topics.

Mathematics

As you are aware, Piedmont Unified School District has adopted Bridges and Number Corner from The Math Learning Center. We are excited to have a comprehensive, developmentally appropriate, engaging program with which to teach our math standards.

We have math five times a week. Math activities include whole and small group problem solving, hands-on math activities involving manipulatives, games, and paper/pencil math. We emphasize problem-solving strategies as well as mastery of basic facts.

Children will often be asked to explain their thinking orally, in writing, or through pictures.

These skills fall under the Common Core Standards for Mathematical Practice: Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them, reason abstractly and quantitatively, construct a viable argument and critique the reasoning of others, model with mathematics, use appropriate tools strategically, attend to precision.

(see <http://www.corestandards.org/Math/Practice/> for more information).

A letter from the Bridges creators for an overview of the third grade math year can be found on our class website.

Math Enrichment

Our math program will be supplemented by Jessica Roine, our math specialist. Challenge math is always available to students in the classrooms.

Teachers and Math Specialist will be

- implementing a mathematically rich curriculum that is suitable for a range of learners.
- assigning challenge problems that are embedded within the Bridges curriculum
- presenting low floor / high ceiling investigations - high achieving students will be asked to present more complex and systematic strategies to the Bridges investigations
- asking high level critical thinking questions during class discussions.
- building math communities within which students will be expected to listen to and critique the ideas of others.
- providing alternative activities during Work Places for students demonstrating a need for rigorous problem solving (teachers and Math Specialists will work together to provide these)
- sharing Work Place game variations
- providing opportunities for small group problem solving/project work with a teacher or Math Specialist (2nd-5th grade) (could be pull-out or push-in)
- presenting 3 Problems of the Month throughout the year
- offering blended learning experiences (individualized learning through the use of tech - to be explored more fully this year)
- providing Fourth Graders with Math Olympiad problems during Work Places- Math Specialist will support this effort)
- offering Math Olympiad contests to Fifth Graders (Math Specialist will facilitate the contests)

~Sarah, Jessica and Kristi
Math Specialsts

Science Areas of Study:

Matter and Energy, Water, Structures of Life, Sun, Moon, and Stars

Social Studies Focuses:

Change and continuity over time (history), California Native Americans, California Geography, Civil Rights, Local and National Government, Symbols of the U.S., and the Economy.

Social/Emotional Growth:

In order to help our students develop to their full potential academically, emotionally, and socially, Havens uses Second Step. Through this program, kids will learn the empathy, emotion-management, and problem-solving skills they need, as well as self-regulation skills.

We will practice “I Messages,” and listening skills as well.

Schedule of Enrichment Classes

Monday: 2:30-3:00 Vocal Music

Tuesday: 10:25-1:55 PE, 1:15-1:45 Library

Wednesday: 11:25-11:55 PE

Thursday: 10:55-11:55 Art, 2:00-3:00 Technology

Friday: 10:55-11:25 PE

Discipline Policy

Discipline in our classroom begins with working together to create classroom expectations and reinforcing positive behavior.

The students have spent time in the beginning of the year creating a learning environment that stresses that we are a “Community of Learners.” Students are expected to be respectful of their peers as well as adults, and follow rules to make the learning environment conducive to all, so everyone has a fair chance at doing their best.

Positive Reinforcement

Individual: Star Chart- A class favorite! The star chart is a fun and visible way for me to give a quick 'thank you' to a student that is demonstrating excellent behavior. When a student fills up the Star Chart, they get an invitation to have a Star Lunch in the classroom where we play games or do a special project.

Wall of Fame- Students give daily appreciations to each other and put students' names on the Wall of Fame for all to see.

Other- I also leave notes for students or check in with positive feedback.

Whole Class: Marble Jar- The class earns (or loses) marbles based on meeting class expectations. When we fill up the jar, we have a class party designed by the students.

Consequences

First disruption- Reminder of expectation.

Second disruption- Student may be asked to move to a different place in the classroom to work. Student and teacher try to solve the problem together. Consequence of further reminders is stated.

Multiple / severe disruptions- Previously stated consequence is given. Usually a call home. Student will talk about their behavior with a family member. I may choose to email the family. I very rarely send students to the office.

Homework

This year, expect these Weekly Homework Assignments:

- 1. **READING.** Read every day for 20+ minutes.
- 2. **WORD WORK.** New spelling list every two weeks. Complete word sort and study words for a spelling test.

*** Word Sorts will NOT be collected. These are practice for a test that will be given in class.

- **3. MATH.** One worksheet from Bridges 'Home Connection' workbook
*** Math worksheets will NOT be collected or reviewed in class. This work is review of concepts and strategies we have covered in class. We hope to use this homework as a way for families to see what we're doing in class. It will not be used for grading purposes.
- **4. MATH.** Practice math facts. Memorizing multiplication facts is *extremely* important. Students can be successful in memorizing these facts in many different ways and need to chose a method that works best for them. We'll be practicing this skill in class and teaching students some strategies to practice at home (flash cards, web sites, games, etc.)
- **6. KEYBOARDING.** Complete one Typing Agent lesson. All students will be learning how to access this program which keeps track of individual progress.
- **7. OTHER.** Special projects, writing, or other assignments may come home (but not weekly)

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Play time, Down time, and Family time!

Elementary school children need ample time for their most important job: unstructured play. Kids of all ages need restorative time to reflect and dream. Families need time together: at meals, on weekends, and during vacations to connect and form lasting bonds.

Conferences

We will have 2 formal conferences this year. They will span a full five-day week. More info to come on the website in regards to signing up! During these conferences we will go over report cards, plan goals, and strategize for success. If, however, there is any need to contact me prior to our scheduled conference, don't hesitate to do so!

Parent Volunteers

Room Parents will coordinate volunteer activities throughout the year. Volunteers will be needed for field trips. Art and Technology times are also open to a few volunteers for extra support.

Birthdays

If a child would like to celebrate their birthday at school they can bring a treat to school on their special day or one close to it.

Please be sure to bring enough for everyone (21 students) along with paper goods for serving the snack. It is usually best to drop it off in the morning with your child.

We will celebrate usually before first recess, if time allows. Please, also, feel free to send in something other than food (stickers, pencils, erasers) to celebrate your child's birthday.

******Allergies:** We have students with peanut, gluten, and egg allergies this year. ********

Field Trips *Exact Dates TBD:*

November- Jr. Center of Arts & Sciences

January- Chabot Space & Science Center

February/March- Zellerbach Hall

March- Hayward Shores

May- Golden Gate Bridge

We appreciate the donations and volunteer drivers that afford us the opportunity to give our students these wonderful hands on experiences. We will need drivers for most trips. We couldn't do it without you! These will be coordinated through the Room Parents.

Postcards

It is always a lot of fun for the class to get mail! If you happen to go on a trip and you can help your child send us a postcard, we would all enjoy it! (It's a good way to sneak in a little writing too!)

Questions?

email: mcampana@piedmont.k12.ca.us In general, this is the best way to contact me about non-urgent matters. I'm not on the computer too much during the day, but I try to check email at lunch or right after school. I don't check email after 4:00 or on the weekend.

Please be aware that I often have meetings before or after school, in which case I am not able to check phone or email messages.

The phone number for the school is 594-2680.

If you need to get a message to me before the end of the school day, call the office. They will be sure I get the message before the day's end. I will get back to you as soon as I am able to.

Final Note

In addition to helping my students achieve academic goals, I hope to encourage them to become open-minded, respectful, and empowered individuals.

If you have any questions about your child's education or, if you would like to meet with me regarding your child's progress, please call, email, or send a note with your child.

Each class and each student is very unique. I'm looking forward to our accomplishments, achievements, successes, and surprises to come over this school year. Here we go!

Sincerely,

Matthew Campana